

The Scuttlebutt Chronicles

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VSO Quarterly Newsletter

Volume No. 12, October, November, December 2021

Veterans Services Team Member

Let's all welcome our NEW Veterans Service Representative- Victoria "Tori" O'Callaghan! Tori was born in San Mateo and raised in the San Mateo and Las Vegas area. She enjoys team sports and has participated in both softball and basketball. Tori relocated to Shasta County after high school in 2007 and started attending Shasta College. She attended college for 1 semester and then joined the United States Navy. Since Tori was 10 or 11 she had dreamed of being in the military. The local Navy recruiter won the recruitment battle providing Tori with the opportunity to honorably serve her country. She attended boot camp and schooling in Great Lakes, IL. Tori served on a Pre-commissioned ship, the USS Dewey DDG-105, in San Diego and "Naval Air Station North Island" on Coronado Island in San Diego.

After the military, Tori and her small family moved back to Shasta County where she became the President of the Foster, Kinship & Adoptive Parent Association, re-enrolled in Shasta College, and along with her spouse, became foster parents to 7 more children. Together they share 8 children ranging in ages 1-21! In her very small allotted down time, Tori is an avid BBQ and meat smoking connoisseur, as well as an RV adventurer.

Tori began her original career with Shasta County in 2017 but joined the VSO in 2021. She chose to join the VSO because she found herself struggling to find her place in the civilian world after her time in service. About a year ago-prior to her father's passing-she and he had the conversation that perhaps there are others like her who felt the same. This conversation cemented her purpose forward to help Veterans in need. Tori's future plans include acing her Veterans accreditation training and spending as much time as possible with her family.

Tori O'Callaghan
Veterans Service Representative

Employee Spotlight



Redding Area Events

October-

- 1st Hawes Farm opens for the season, see website for information
- 1st Nash Ranch opens for the season, see website for information
- 9th Big Bike Weekend @ Holiday Inn, Red Lion 11am-4pm
- 10th Cottonwood Lions Pancake Breakfast 8am
- 16th Alyssa's Wings of an Angel 19th Annual Spaghetti Feed with the Sons of Italy @ Sons of Italy Lodge 4pm – 7:30pm
- 16th Six Annual Benton Faire Classic Car Show 8am
- 23rd Harvest Festival @ Moseley Family Cellars 2pm – 5pm
- 23rd Hogwarts Express @ Caldwell Park 5pm
- 23rd Brunch with Bubbles on the River 10am fundraiser for girls in the North State @ Riverview Country Club

November-

- 4th RABA Fundraiser for Veterans Bus Passes
- 5th Schreder Planetarium Program: Star Travel 7pm
- 6th Shasta Lake Veterans Day Parade 10am
- 11th Veterans Day @ Igo Cemetery 11am
- 13th Forever our Faire Shasta Fair Grounds
- 13th Holiday Boutique @ First Christian Church 3590 Placer Street 9am-3pm
- 13th Comedian Jo Koy at the Redding Civic 8pm
- 14th Cottonwood Lions Breakfast 8am
- 14th George Thorogood Redding Civic 7pm
- 25th -26th Happy Thanksgiving- the Veterans Services Department will be closed for the Holiday

December-

- 4th Lighted Christmas Tree Parade TBD (will post on FB)
- 10th Cottonwood Community Center Holiday Craft Event 10am
- 12th Cottonwood Lions Pancake Breakfast 8am
- 18th Wreaths Across America TBD (will post on FB)
- 23rd, 24th, 31st – VSO Office Closed for Christmas and New Years Holiday

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



UNITES STATES NAVY
OCTOBER 13TH 1775



UNITES STATES MARINES
NOVEMBER 10TH 1775



NATIONAL GUARD
DECEMBER 13TH 1636

****OUT OF THE AREA- Upcoming Veterans Events****

October

- *Oroville, California, 02 October 2021: NRG Fundraiser at Feather Falls Casino Car Show We need more volunteers! Six (6) NRG members will be used to support a fundraiser for the Northern Recon Group. Contact Floyd 530-673-9195
- *Orland, California, 16 October 2021: Antique Truck Show & BBQ the third Saturday in October each year. This year the organizers have added military vehicles. For more information contact Bill 530-624-0148.
- *Arbuckle, California, 31 October 2021: Arbuckle Car Show. \$20 entry fee prior or \$30 on day of show. Contact Walt 530-713-7889

November

- *Gustine, California, 11 November 2021: Veterans Day Parade and Activities in Gustine. Contact Don 209-765-1273
- *Marysville, California, 11 November 2021: Veterans Day Parade and Activities in Marysville. Contact Cary 530-701-5141
- *Elk Grove, California, 11 November 2021: Veterans Day Parade and Activities in Elk Grove. In conjunction with Elk Grove American Legion Post 233. Contact David C. 916-215-6661
- *Sacramento, California, 11 November 2021: Veterans Day Parade and Activities in Sacramento. Call 916- 719-1776.
- *Merced, California, 11 November 2021: Veterans Day Parade and Activities in Merced. Please contact George S. 559- 251-0656.
- *Petaluma, California, 11 November 2021: Petaluma Veterans Day Parade. Support the North Bay Military Vehicle Club. Contact Michael 707-332-3871
- *Marysville, California, 20 November 2021: Annual NRG Christmas Party Over forty years of celebrating a successful year of group events and fellowship. A gift exchange along with lunch and a photo review of the year's events will take place. Contact Walt or Ellen 530-713-7889.

List courtesy of Military Vehicle Preservation Association
<https://www.northernrecongroup.org/Current-Events-2021.html>



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Attention Veterans, spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients in the Redding and McClellan area! Interested in receiving a flu shot or a first, second, third or booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine? We'll be offering the Pfizer and flu vaccines at the Redding and McClellan VA Clinics on Saturday, Oct. 2. Please see below for times and locations. Flu shots will be available for Veterans enrolled in VA health care only.

To ensure you can receive a vaccine as quickly as possible and sufficient supply is available, we highly recommend scheduling an appointment. Walk-in visits are welcome while supplies last. To make an appointment, please call 800-382-8387, option 8.

McClellan VA Clinic 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Redding VA Clinic 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

If you are interested in receiving the Moderna or Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccines, please schedule an appointment or visit <https://www.va.gov/northern-california-health-care/programs/covid-19-vaccines/> to learn about walk-in hours.

Let's beat this pandemic!



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VET CENTER- READJUSTMENT COUNSELING- CHICO VET CENTER

Who We Are

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional readjustment counseling to eligible Veterans, active-duty service members, including National Guard and Reserve components, and their families. Readjustment counseling is offered to make a successful transition from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event experienced in the military. Individual, group, marriage and family counseling is offered in addition to referral and connection to other VA or community benefits and services. Vet Center counselors and outreach staff, many of whom are Veterans themselves, are experienced and prepared to discuss the tragedies of war, loss, grief and transition after trauma.

VET CENTER HISTORY

Vet Centers (Readjustment Counseling) were established by Congress in 1979 out of the recognition that a significant number of Vietnam era Vets were still experiencing readjustment problems. Vet Centers are community based and part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In April 1991, in response to the Persian Gulf War, Congress extended the eligibility to Veterans who served during other periods of armed hostilities after the Vietnam era. Those other periods are identified as Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, and Kosovo/Bosnia.

In October 1996, Congress extended the eligibility to include WWII and Korean Combat Veterans. The goal of Vet Centers is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible Veterans in order to help them make a satisfying post-war readjustment to civilian life. On April 1, 2003, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs extended eligibility for Vet Center services to Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and on June 25, 2003, Vet Center eligibility was extended to Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and subsequent operations within the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The family members of all Veterans listed above are eligible for Vet Center services as well. On August 5, 2003, then-VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi authorized Vet Centers to furnish bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children and siblings of service members who die of any cause while on active duty, to include federally activated Reserve and National Guard personnel.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Vet Center Call Center

1-877-927-8387 is a free, around the clock confidential call center where Veterans, service members and their families can talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in transitioning after military service or trauma and get connected to their nearest Vet Center. Our call center team is comprised of combat Veterans from several eras as well as family members of Veterans.

CHICO VET CENTER – 530-899-6300
250 Cohasset Road. Suite 40. **Chico**, CA 95926



Whether you come in for one-on-one counseling or to participate in a group session, at Vet Centers you can form social connections, try new things, and build a support system with people who understand you and want to help you succeed.

FUNDRAISER



RABA Salute to Veterans *Save the Date* November 4th 2021 6am – 1pm



RABA **SALUTE TO VETERANS**
COMMUNITY DRIVE-THRU FUNDRAISER

Help Local Veterans Get Around Town

The Shasta County Veterans Service Office serves 8,500 veterans every year, who need affordable transportation to get to work, school, and medical appointments. RABA supports these local veterans and will match you 50 cents for each \$1 donation.

The Shasta County Veterans Services Department will be closed
October 18th - October 22nd
for a Mandatory California Training Conference

All Representatives must maintain their CEU's yearly

*Training conferences provide our team the knowledge to fight for you
against the VBA.*

Thank you for your
understanding- we will be back
Monday Morning – October 25th ready to roll!

OCTOBER IS AGENT ORANGE AWARENESS MONTH



October is Agent Orange Awareness Month. It is a month that has been set aside to become more aware and knowledgeable about Agent Orange's history and use as a defoliant as well as how it was used in chemical warfare by the United States in Vietnam among other countries. Agent Orange is a herbicide and defoliant chemical, one of the "tactical use" Rainbow Herbicides. It is widely known for its use by the U.S. military as part of its herbicidal warfare program, Operation Ranch Hand, during the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1971. It is a mixture of equal parts of two herbicides, 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. In addition to its damaging environmental effects, traces of dioxin found in the mixture have caused major health problems for many individuals who were exposed, and their offspring.

Ingredients

For the Acorn Squash

2 acorn squashes cut half with seeds scooped out

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon paprika

Salt and pepper to taste

For Sausage and Kale Stuffed

1 +1 tablespoons olive oil

1 pound spicy Italian sausage casings removed and nitrate-free

1/2 large onion diced

2 cloves garlic minced

2 cups white mushroom sliced

1/2 bunch of kale center rib removed and torn into pieces (about 3 cups prepared)

1/2 cup tomato sauce make your own or use sugar-free tomato sauce
kosher salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

Preheat oven to 370 degrees F.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Pour olive oil over the acorn squash and sprinkle with paprika, salt and pepper.

Bake in over for 50-60 minutes, until skin is soft and fork-tender.

While squash is cooking, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.

Add sausage and using a wood spoon break into coarse pieces. Cook until brown.

It's about 5-6 minutes. Then, set it aside.

In the same skillet, add remaining 1 tablespoon oil and onions; cook until they're soft, 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds.

Add mushroom and cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Add kale and toss; add tomato sauce and cover the skillet with a lid and cook until kale is tender.

Bring back the sausage and stir well to combine.

Divide kale-sausage filling among squash.

Top with Parmesan if you desire before serving. Enjoy!

Stuffed Acorn Squash

Opening Ceremony Shasta College Veterans Success Center 2021





In an effort to honor and appreciate
our local Veterans,
Groceries are available for you.
Present your DL with **VETERAN**
designation, DD214 or show us your
VHA Health Card

All Veterans over the age 65 are encouraged to visit!



GROCERIES FOR VETERANS

**THE SALVATION ARMY
REDDING**

Every Wednesday
9:00-11:00 AM
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED



2691 Larkspur Lane Redding, CA 96003
530.222.2207 press 2

Actor Gary Sinise Supports Veterans with Brain Injury and PTSD

Playing Lieutenant Dan in *Forrest Gump* inspired Sinise to establish a foundation that aids soldiers' physical and mental well-being.

- Sinise is helping make that successful psychic journey available to thousands of veterans and first responders across the United States through his charitable organization, the Gary Sinise Foundation, and its newly established Avalon Network.
- Raising more than \$40 million a year since its founding in 2011, the Sinise Foundation supports the mental and emotional wellness of returning soldiers and emergency medical personnel. Through his work, Sinise seeks to remove the stigma surrounding posttraumatic stress (he doesn't use "disorder" because he says it suggests that the symptoms are permanent) and other psychological difficulties. "Posttraumatic stress is a natural human response to the trauma they have experienced," the actor-director says. He also strives to create a sense of community: "No one experiencing hardships from symptoms related to posttraumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries should go it alone."
- This year Sinise reinforced his commitment by establishing the Avalon Network, with major funding from philanthropists Bernie Marcus and Arthur M. Blank, co-founders of Home Depot. One of Avalon's goals is to expand a treatment program developed at the University of Colorado's Marcus Institute for Brain Health to nine other medical centers around the country, including the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Tulane University in New Orleans, Jefferson University in Philadelphia, the University of Florida in Jacksonville, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- The program offers three weeks of multidisciplinary treatment to eligible veterans and first responders—for free, including travel and lodging for them and their families. It is based on a model of care pioneered at the US government's National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE).
- "We have a team of neurologists and other specialists—trauma counseling, sleep medicine, [headache](#) care, and more—all working together in one place," explains neurologist James P. Kelly, MD, FAAN, executive director of the Marcus Institute. "Gary and his foundation have now joined forces with the Marcus Institute to bring this highly effective treatment to other areas of the country."
- In addition, the Avalon Network is making the work of the Bluemont, VA–based Boulder Crest Foundation available nationally. Boulder Crest runs a peer-based program that helps soldiers process their trauma. The program, Sinise says, "is based on the reality that these veterans have been through an intense, sometimes harrowing experience, and then return home to share that experience as well as their strengths and hope. In sharing their experience, they can be of service to others who also may be struggling."

Learn More

The Gary Sinise Foundation Avalon Network is a cognitive health and mental wellness network providing transformative care to veterans and first responders experiencing posttraumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and substance abuse. Its programs are free through the generous support of the foundation. To apply for care or make a donation, visit garysinisefoundation.org.



Lions have recognized the urgent need for corrective lenses and collect usable glasses in their communities to support the

Lions Recycle For Sight Program

Refractive errors can be easily corrected with eyeglasses, yet millions living in low and middle income countries lack access to basic eye care services. **Lions** have recognized the urgent need for corrective lenses and collect usable glasses in their communities to support the **Lions Recycle For Sight Program.**



Visit our office to donate!

What you need to know about VA debts and debt relief notification

VA is resuming debt notification to Veterans effective Oct. 1, 2021.

If you owe money to VA for an overpayment related to Veterans benefits, or for medical care and pharmacy debt, here is what you need to know.

Benefit debt

VA automatically deferred collection on benefit debts created on or after April 6, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2021, to provide relief from the COVID-19 pandemic. Benefit debts created prior to April 6, 2020, had collection deferred upon request. VA also paused all collection activity on debts under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Treasury until Sept. 30, 2021.

Most VBA benefit debts are collected by the VA [Debt Management Center](#) (DMC). This includes debts for benefits, like compensation, pension and education. If VBA created a debt for you while collection was deferred, you likely received informational letters from DMC letting you know your debt existed, but you didn't need to act until after September 30 unless you chose to do so.

What's happening now

On Oct. 1, 2021, the DMC began sending debt notification letters, which include timelines for next steps. The letters will be sent in phases over a period of several months, so you may not receive your debt notification in October. If you requested DMC to temporarily stop your payment plan due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will not automatically resume on Oct. 1, 2021.

Relief Options

If you are experiencing financial difficulty and can't repay your VA debt right away, there are a variety of relief options available, including: Extending repayment plans, Requesting debt forgiveness through the waiver process, Submitting a compromise offer to settle the debt for less than the full amount, Requesting a temporary hardship suspension of repayment until September 30, 2022

What happens if you don't contact DMC when you receive your debt notice?

If you are receiving VA benefits, VA will withhold money from your benefit payments to pay an outstanding debt. It is important to contact DMC once you receive your debt notification letter if the amount VA is proposing to withhold from your benefits doesn't work for you.

Eventually, unpaid debts can become delinquent and subject to referral to the Department of the Treasury and/or Credit Reporting Agencies. Currently, DMC is continuing to pause new benefit debt referrals to the Department of Treasury or Credit Reporting Agencies to make sure Veterans have plenty of time to make payment arrangements or request relief. For any debts that were already referred before the pandemic, Treasury is resuming collection activities beginning Oct. 1, 2021.

Contact Info

If you need assistance with options for your VBA benefit debt, call the DMC at 1-800-827-0648 or submit your request online at <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/app/ask/>. Veterans can also access benefit debt information, such as balance and debt letters at <https://www.va.gov/manage-va-debt>.

Medical care and pharmacy debt

The American Rescue Plan, passed in March 2021, included a provision that canceled copayments for medical care and pharmacy services received April 6, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021, and directed refunds to be issued. **To date**, VA has canceled \$880 million in copayments for over 2.4 million Veterans, issuing over \$240 million in refunds to 1.5 million Veterans who made payments on charges established prior to the passing of the American Rescue Plan.

Collection of copayments for medical care and pharmacy services will resume on Oct. 1, 2021. October 2021 statements will show charges incurred for medical care and pharmacy services provided prior to April 6, 2020 and on or after Oct. 1, 2021. VA staff has completed copayment refunds for care provided April 6, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021. VHA began sending statements for information only in July 2021 to keep Veterans informed of balances owed.

Debt relief options such as repayment plans, waivers and compromises are available. Veterans can [click here](#) for information or call 866-400-1238, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET to learn more.

Happy Fall y'all! Looks like some events are coming up in Shasta County where Veterans can get outdoors. Let's hope COVID dwindles down and we can head into the holiday season with joyful memories with our families. Our Department has continued to file VA claims through all spring and summer. I encourage every veteran and their spouse to come into the Veterans Services to review their benefits. Benefits can change from year to year, and we want to give you the latest news. As always, we are Veterans Serving Veterans.



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Veteran Services Office

Office: 530-225-5616 Option #2

Visit our webpage for printable checklists.

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facebook